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TOO LATE.

BY MARCO O. ROLFE.

Oh, I loved you, little Bessie,
Three years of long ago!
You were fair, with rose maiden,
And I a bashful beau;
But I loved you truly, Bessie,
Though I never told you so.

And I love you now, sweet Bessie,
As in the days gone by;
I shall love you ever, darling—
Love you always—till I die!
Will you drop a tear, sweet Bessie—
Will you pause to breathe a sigh—

Where the green grass grows above me,
And the willows gently wave?
And let fall a tear, sweet Bessie—
Only bring me to my grave?
Only grieve me to the bone, Bessie,
One warm tear is all I crave!

I am going soon, dear Bessie—
I have little time to waste—
Going home to heaven, Bessie,
To that blessed holy state!
Won't you love me, Bessie darling?
I have waited—the too late!

The Black Crescent: OR, COALS AND ASHES OF LIFE.

A MASKED MYSTERY OF BALTIMORE.

BY A. P. MORRIS, JR.

AUTHOR OF "HOODWINKED," "RALPH HAMON, THE CHEMIST," "THE WARNING ARROW," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER IV.

A PAIR OF VILLAINS, AND WHERE ONE WENT.

The two men who sipped their "punch" at Wilson's were widely different in face, form and dress.

One was about twenty-four years of age, rather tall, with black eyes, effeminate features, dark, straight hair, and an attempt at side-whiskers.

From his fashionable attire we draw inference that he had money; though his vest-pockets might be turned inside out, and like those of a host innumerable who move among us "on stilts" nowadays, be found the very perfection of emptiness.

This party was Harold Haxon. Sometimes he had money—sometimes he had not. What his occupation was no one knew, and few cared, as long as he dressed well and maintained the *role* of a gentleman.

The other individual was built square and heavy, with a face that bristled with neglected beard, and disgusted one with its leering glance; for the complexion was dirty and brown, and the eyes bloodshot and dull.

Harold Haxon's face was pale as he cast uneasy glances about him, and the hand which held the glass trembled a little.

"I tell you, Gil Bret, I saw the face. I am sure it was *she*. If there ever was such a woman, she confronted me on the bridge, to-night!"

"Bah! Spooks!" exclaimed Bret, guardedly, while his repulsive features wore an expression of contempt. "I allus said you was a baby, 'ith all your nerve, I did. You'd better ave' let medo' t. I'd fixed 'im. Then you didn't tickle 'im at all, eh?"

"Yes, I did! I struck him once, and I would have finished him but for the sudden appearance, as if from the grave—"

"Bah!" Bret interrupted. "Look 'ere now; such things can't be. Didn't we draw 'er oursle's, off Locust Point?"

"We did, Gil. Bret; and there were others who assisted, who, no doubt, will swear, like you, that she can not be alive. But I am not given to superstition—like old Forde—ha! ha! ha!"

"Jes' so!" chimed in Bret, seeming pleased at the last words of his companion; for he grinned broadly, and nodded his head severely.

Haxon continued: "Not being superstitious, you see, I know of but one explanation for that which I saw. The woman was not drowned, and is now watching us closely—as is evident from her timely arrival, upon the scene to-night. I say timely, for if she had not come, Austin Burns was doomed! I had scarcely strength enough to get away, I was so dumbfounded."

"Now, kin this *be*?" soliloquized Gil. Bret, gazing into the nearly-emptied glass.

Then, as if he was more inclined to give credence to Harold Haxon's tale of the ghostly face, he said, whisperingly:

"If she is alive, we aren't *swee*! She'll have the 'stars' down onto us afore we kin travel! But mind, are you sure the youngster isn't done for as 'tis? Hey?"

"I really can't say."

"You struck 'im 'ith a knife?"

"Certainly! And aimed at his heart."

"You did, eh? Well, if Gil. Bret was to do that're much, he'd know whether somebody weren't hurt or no, he would! Think 'e knew you?"

"Impossible! I was well muffled."

"Settle for them punches, an' let's be out of this."

Harold Haxon discovered sufficient stamps in his pocket to pay for the beverages, and they left Wilson's, going eastward.

Where are you going, Bret?"

Gil. Bret, whose lead had indicated their direction, answered, gruffly:

"To the bridge. Come on. You can't half-do these things, I know. Now, if you was like me, you'd know no diff'ence 'ith such jobs. If I'd bu'sted 'im onc, he'd gone under 'ithout no foolin'."

"But you don't expect to find Austin Burns—"

"If you hit square, he's layin' somewhere

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"There!" he said, as he placed the cape over her shoulders. "That'll keep you warm!"

near, yet. That woman hasn't had time to drag 'im far."

"But she may have called a policeman—"

"An' if she has, an' if he aren't dead—then you 'n' me look out. That's all."

As they hurried past the corner of Gay and Baltimore streets, one of the many loungers who frequent that spot made some remark relative to their rapid gait which displeased Gil. Bret.

He paused for a second, clenched his ponderous fist, and had already taken a step toward them with the intention of inaugurating a fight, when Haxon laid a detaining hand upon his shoulder.

"You've no time for that, Bret; come on."

Thus reminded, the bruiser—for he was such—resumed his way, blaming himself for being so easily aroused.

It was singular that a mere remark should anger Bret. While his brain was far from intellectual, it was neither thick nor weak; and he was never troubled with that peculiar mental density in planning which characterized most men of his class.

Haxon owed his social position to the brain of Gil. Bret. He owed what education he had to Gil. Bret, who, he remembered, had looked after him, carefully, since early childhood. He owed Gil. Bret for the promising prospect of marrying Eola Forde. In many ways, Gil. Bret was a mystery to him; but that worthy "rough" was as reticent as he was enigmatical.

When the two men reached the bridge at Fayette street, of course Austin Burns had disappeared.

"Come," said Haxon; "I told you he would be gone. I suppose he's dead—I hope so. The Sun, American, and Gazette to the bridge. Come on. You can't half-do these things, I know. Now, if you was like me, you'd know no diff'ence 'ith such jobs. If I'd bu'sted 'im onc, he'd gone under 'ithout no foolin'."

"But you don't expect to find Austin Burns—"

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the doorsill, he exclaimed, triumphantly: "Here he is!"

Then he ascended the steps, and, leaning over to the window, looked through the half-closed blinds into the room.

Austin was lying upon a sofa, and over him was bending a man, whose actions at once told that he was a physician.

The young man's breast was exposed, and Gil. Bret saw the ugly wound.

"Haxy did tickle 'im some!" thought the bruiser, as he turned away. "An' now, as I know where the chap is, why, I'll give 'im the next shake, an' do some cuttin' on my own account!"

He hastened back over the route he had come, passing Leache's, and soon took a seat in a car of the Blue Line, for South Baltimore.

Next we see him ascending the rickety steps—more like worn boxes thrown roughly together—which lead to the first-story room of one of the filthiest-looking houses in Guilford Alley.

Entering the apartment, which was lighted by a two-cent dip, he glanced around upon its occupants.

At one side was an apology for a stove, and near this sat a woman of full seventy years, withered in countenance, and hair silvered by the frosts of time. Between her teeth was held, firmly, an old, oil-soaked clay pipe, and a sickening odor arose from its sizzling bowl.

Near her, attired scantily for the cold season, was a beautiful girl, and as we look upon her, we are riveted in astonishment.

Were we not certain that Eola Forde was, at that moment, in her father's house, we should say that Eola Forde was here before us in this girl!

The counterpart was exact, save that this face was the youngest by at least two years.

She sat, gazing absently at the floor, but looked up as Gil. Bret entered.

The last feature of the scene was a bed, wherein lay something—a human form—covered with a sheet.

"Is she dead yet?" were the first words of the bruiser, as he closed the door after him.

"Dead!" answered the crone.

"Dead!" echoed the girl, in a low voice, that was musical despite the sad tenor in which she spoke.

Bret advanced to the couch, and turned down the sheet.

"An' that's the last of Louise Ternor!" he muttered, slowly, contemplating the icy face.

"The last!" said the old woman, dimly.

"The last!" echoed the girl.

"Don't you be so gloomy 'bout it!" he exclaimed, wheeling around. "It's nothin' but death; an' we're all a-goin' to die some time."

"She died happy, Gil, my boy," and the girl said:

"Yes—happy."

"Happy!" Well, I hope she did, that's all. People don't of die *very* happy when their mind's full of their bad doin'—like her'n was. An' I spec' I'll kick ag'in the curb a long time afore I kin die *very* happy—when I do die."

"She was forgiven," half interrupted she of the pipe; and the fair girl, with gaze still bent, absently, upon the worn planks, added:

"Forgiven in the last hour. How sweet!"

Gil. Bret seemed perplexed. He glanced first at one, then at the other, and finally demanded, as he strode to a position between them:

"Forgive, you say? How? Who could forgive er?"

"Her old rival, my boy; her old enemy—she was here to-night, right after you went out. But she didn't recognize me!"

"Yes, she was here," endorsed the girl.

"You lie, Marian Mead!" he cried. "How kin such things be? The one 'at she wronged is dead!"

"Not dead!" asserted the elder of the females.

"Not dead!" repeated Marian.

He seemed more perplexed, and was a little excited at the announcement.

"No! She weren't! She's dead!"

"She was, too, an' she's not dead," went on the crone, in a cracked voice; "and she an' Louise Ternor had a long talk-over by the bed."

"An' what id they say—she—both? Hey?"

"I didn't hear. They spoke in whispers, Gil."

"How was she dressed?—the—"

"In black all over."

"In black! Then Bertha Blake is alive! Haxy was right!"

He began pacing the narrow limit of the room, his shaggy brows contracted in thought, for the news he had received appeared to trouble him.

CHAPTER V.

"OLE WOMAN, WE'RE BU'ST."

PRESIDENTLY, Gil. Bret advanced to the bed, and inserting his long arm, half its length, between the two mattresses, at the head, moved it, as if in search of something, toward the foot.

"Tain't any use," said the woman, who was noting his actions.

"Blast the luck!" he exclaimed, harshly, as he withdrew his arm and faced the two.

"Tain't any use, I said."

"Where's the bug? Hey?—the leather bag?"

"Gone," and Marian echoed the word.

"Gone! Not You don't mean it? Truth, now; I'll choke you both, if you tell me any lies!" "Isn't gone."

"It's gone," returned the old woman, puffing furiously at her pipe. "Louise Ternor gave it to the woman in black."

If Gil. Bret was troubled in the knowledge that the woman in black had been in attendance upon Louise Ternor ere the latter passed from this world to the next, the news that the leather bag he inquired for was gone created a stronger excitement in him; for his liquor-bloated cheeks reddened, his dull eyes snapped fire, and he uttered a fierce oath as he strode forward, grasped the crone rudely by the shoulder, and growled, savagely:

"Fools! Both fools! Do you know what's in that ere bag?"

"Yes," they answered.

"You do!" and he fairly jumped; "what?"

"Money," returned the woman.

"Money! Yes—there was money in it! But how much, eh? I'll tell you. There was five thousand dollars in that ere bag, in notes an' gold!"

At this the females, in turn, started. The sum was enormous to them.

"Five thousand dollars!" they repeated, in astonishment.

"Yes, there was. Bu'st me to thunder!—this is the *worst* I ever saw! An' she, Bertha Blake, 'ere she abused her, most indecently, and in language wonderfully abbreviated, 'as got it! Ole woman, I say ag'in, you're a fool!"

The object, at whom sped this closing compliment nodded her head, but said nothing.

"She gave me ten dollars before she went away, Gil. Bret," said Marian, timidly: "if you want that you can have it."

"And me the same," added the crone; "take mine too."

"Bah! I don't want no such amount. Keep your money. You'll want the whole on't. We've got to split, now."

They looked at him, inquiringly.

"Put on your hat an' shawl, an' git!" he continued, addressing Marian Mead.

"I don't know what you mean, Gil. Bret," looking at him with wide-opened eyes.

"Then I'll tell you," pausing before her, running his hands in his pockets, and drawing back his lips until he looked more like a bulldog than ever. "I said we're goin' to split. Cording to grammar, 'split' means dividin' longitudinally. See? Now, put on your things an' git!"

She evidently caught his meaning, for she cried:

"You don't want me to go out, this cold night, Gil. Bret? See! I've hardly any clothes. I would freeze!"

"Git up an' git!" raising his voice to a higher pitch and frowning darkly.

She understood. She was to separate from the two beings before her. But, on such a night, in such apparel, to go upon the street! The thought itself sent a chill through her young veins.

Yet, there was an impetus to obey, which soothed her sinking spirit.

Marian Mead had never known a relative in this world. From that far date in infancy, to which the matured fancy sometimes takes its flight, to the present hour, she had not known any one who claimed connection with her, save the two in whose company we find her, upon her introduction to the reader.

She had lived with them always in a state of seeming poverty—in the vilest sections and most miserable habitations—yet she had never been forced to beg a morsel, or work for bread.

Ever near, seeming to follow them like a shadow, had been the one who now lay upon the bed, in death's shriveling clutches, Louise Ternor.

This woman had appeared, to her, mysteriously wealthy for one who dressed in rags—and Marian had never seen her but in rags; and though she had never sought, or obtained, any knowledge of her, beyond the fact of her constant presence and an interest in their welfare, still she had been impressed, more than once, with the shade of mental torment, unconcealable anxiety, which rested on Louise Ternor's brow.

It was a short time before the opening of our story, that this Louise Ternor came to Gil. Bret's abode in Guilford Alley, stricken with a terrible fever. At Marian's hands, she received constant and loving attention; and at times, the invalid, when gazing up into the sweet face which beat so tenderly over her, would burst into tears, as though the features she beheld, coupled with an unspoken thought, touched some aching portion of her heart.

On this night, Louise Ternor had been visited by the woman in black, whose presence had acted most strangely on the sinking one.

"At last!" Marian heard her say. "You've come at last! You will forgive! You will? I am dying, now!" and she and the crone had taxed their ears in vain to catch more of the low-voiced conversation that ensued.

When the woman in black was about to depart, Louise Ternor raised herself to her elbow, and cried:

"Farewell! I am going! There's Marian take her! God bless—God bless you, Bertha Blake!" An hour afterward, her spirit had passed through the broad realms of space and ascended to the tribunal of the skies.

The woman in black, before taking leave, drew forth the leather bag, and extracting twenty dollars therefrom, divided it equally between Marian and the old woman. Then imprinting a kiss on the former's lips, she said:

"Take courage, dear girl; I shall soon have you with me. Your life will be a happy one, yet!"

The words had set Marian to wondering after their strange visitor had departed; for they were spoken whisperingly, and for her ear alone.

Gil. Bret had never treated Marian rudely; on the contrary, had acted as kindly as was in his illiterate nature. Still, the young girl had ever felt ill at ease with her rough companions—as if she were torn from her proper sphere by a fate which had cast her within these associations, purposely to conflict with the earnest wishes of her heart, which told her she was out of place in such society.

And all this flitted through Marian's mind as she put on the worn hat and threadbare shawl that were hers, and started to obey Bret's order to depart.

"Hold on there a minit!" he said, going up to her, as she laid her hand upon the door-knob. "You said that woman give you ten dollars—didn't you?"

"Yes. Do you want it?"

"Bah! Shucks! I on'y wanted to know if you had it, that's all. An' sides, look! I want you to git out of Baltimore. Understand? Go over to Washington. You kin make a livin' there, somehow, easy enough. But, mind now, I don't want to see you roun' here no more."

"I understand," was the meek response. "Git them."

When Marian had passed out, Bret turned to the crone, who was knocking the ashes from her pipe, seeing entirely unconcerned by what had transpired.

"Ole woman, we're bu'st!" he declared, flatly and enigmatically, blinking vacantly as his ideas appeared to divide themselves between the words he spoke and a host of thoughts which swelled in his brain.

"I say we're bu'st!" he repeated, after a brief silence, jamming his fist into his coat pockets in a manner indicative of a very spiteful humor.

"What do you mean, Gil, my boy?" she inquired, squeaking.

"I mean that we ain't got no more money, that's all! That ere bag had *five thousand* DOLLARS in it! I foun' it out a couple o' weeks gone, an' counted on't to ship us through life—see? Now, then, it's gone, an' we're bu'st! I ain't got more'n fifty dollars to buy a coffin th'." You was a fool, ole woman, to let that 'ere bag go!—you was."

"There's one thing left, Gil," she ventured, moving uneasily beneath the gaze of those bleak eyes, as they fixed angrily upon her.

"An' what's that, *I'd* like to know?"

For a second, she returned his steadfast gaze in silence. Then, leaning forward, she spurted, between two rows of yellow, decaying, crumbling teeth:

"The Black Crescent!"

Gil. Bret started all over—that is, he stepped backward, raised his arms as his two brawny fists clenched, and, while his mouth opened, the dull, muddy eyes brightened as he repeated her words.

"Hai! hai! we ain't bu'st yet—are we?"

That's good, now. I wouldn't a' thought of that. Jes' so! we'll have the crescent! It's a big game; but, I guess Gil. Bret kin run the machine, if *anybody* kin! Ole Ford's got it an' Haxy's goin' to see 'im tomorrow. Eh—he! I'll give Haxy some more to split. Cording to grammar, 'split' means dividin' longitudinally. See? Now, put on your things an' git!"

"You are punctual, Bret"—looking at his watch, which indicated ten precisely.

"Yes. Though we aren't at the place of meetin'."

Haxon looked around him. He had not paid much attention to his whereabouts, as he walked in reverie, and they now stood before the Opera House—so called—at the Falls.

"Why, I forgot myself."

"Rather. Come; we'll go back again."

"Where to?"

"Fountain Saloon."

"Calvert street?"

"Yes."

"Too far, Bret: Some place nearer."

"Jus' the place. Tables an' curtains. We kin whisper, an' have it soft. We must have a talk. I'm purty near bu'st in stamps, an' we've got to make a raise. Ole woman's cleared out, Lord knows where, an' the bank's flat. Understand?"

"No money?" put uneasily.

"Not much on't, now I tell you. If we don't make a raise, we'll go for rooms at Bayview, in a month—"

"What has happened?"

"Just you come along, now, an' let up till we git where we kin talk. You've got somethin' else to make a row 'bout, up to ole Ford's house, to-day. No talk now."

As the two passed the market, at the Maryland Institute, elbowing their way through the throng that talked, idled and jostled before the pavement stands, a woman, standing in the east archway, seemed suddenly surprised at their appearance, and, evidently, did not wish to be seen by them, for she drew back, instead of advancing, as was her first intention, and turning to a large, powerful man who accompanied her, and who was carrying a large market-basket, she hurriedly said something.

He flashed a quick glance upon Haxon and Bret, and then, summoning a colored boy who lounged near, he gave the lad his basket, and started in pursuit of the two villains.

The woman was she of the black garments, and the man to whom she spoke was Wat. Blake.

She looked after the three, until they were lost to view in the crowd, and then, with the boy in tow, took a car going west.

When Harold Haxon and his companion were safely ensconced behind the falling curtains, at the Fountain saloon, the first said:

"Now tell me what's the matter. What do you mean by saying we have no more money? Only yesterday you told me your purpose, though reduced to fifty 'greens,' would contain five thousand more within a week."

"Cheese it!" interrupted the bruiser; "wait till we git rid of this 'ere moke," and he added, addressing the grinning mulatto, whose bar-stained face appeared at that juncture:

"Two fries—sharp! to Lightnin', now!"

"Now I tell you—"settling himself back and fixing his companion. "When I said I'd have five thousand more purty soon, I meant it. But, see, there aren't nothin' more uncertain in life, than countin' on exactly what ain't on hand. See? As you an' me never lived together, you don't know what's goin' on 'twixt me 'n' you; an' I ain't goin' to tell you, because I'd have to tell you some of the secrets of your life. See?—sides, tain't none of your business. But there's somethin' happened at 'll knock my ideas of that five thousand into scrapes wuss 'an the Jones Falls committee question!"

"You mean to say that it has slipped through your fingers?"

"T—h—i—t's it!"

"Da—"

"Jes' so! Now, 'twich much jaw-bustin', we've got to git stamps, cause, I tell you, they're pizzen to vagrants here in Baltimore, they are—an' I kin tell you just where we're a-goin' to git them stamps!"

"To procure money?" and Haxon's face brightened.

"Shh!" admonished Bret.

The waiter's return with the oysters checked their conversation. When they were once more alone, Haxon inquired:

"How are we to obtain this money?—and what do you want me to do?"

"Just pitch inter these ere fellers, an' satisfy them in ards," said Bret, himself setting the example by an immediate attack upon the bivalves.

Gil. Bret was Haxon's banker. He furnished funds, without receiving deposits—except when Haxon was favored by one of those miraculous runs of luck, which so very few fighters of "the tiger" experience during their professional career; and on these occasions, the lucre, or "greens," was divided.

The day was a beautiful one, with scarce a stray mist to mar the clear blue of the heavens; and what snow yet lay upon the earth, glistened in the sunlight, like soft bosoms of some strangely-brilliant ore.

When informed by Bret, in the blunt manner we have seen, that the bank was now "flat," the announcement startled him; for he must have money, in order to maintain his position as a gentleman of

leisure and wealth—which position he had gained through some sharp maneuver.

His uneasiness, however, at their apparent penniless state, was banished when Bret, his guardian, his companion, his providing genius, informed him that there was a "half" within easy grasp; but he knew too well the nature of his inseparable associate, to importune for information when Bret evinced a disposition to be tardy.

As he neared the bridge over the Falls, at Baltimore street, these reveries were formed into low-spoken words.

"What can have become of him?—Austin Burns. I know I struck deep! Yet, it can't be that he is dead, or the morning papers would have ferreted the occurrence out, and I have searched their columns in vain. Can it be that that infernal woman has taken him in her care?—that the stab was not fatal?—that she will tell him who was aimed the blow at his life, and, when he is recovered, bring him forward to—no, Harold Haxon, you must not allow yourself to count up difficulties ahead. But if she has done this, I'll find her out, and she shall be put out of the way this time, beyond a doubt! No more Locust Point failures, by the Eternal!"

"Sun, American and Gazette!" yelled an urchin, within a foot of his ear, "buy one, sir!"

"No," he answered, sharply; for the boy's shrill tone had startled him.

"Yet," he continued, letting his gaze fall to the pavement again; "what have I against this woman? Nothing—except that Gil. Bret keeps impressing on my mind that she is my enemy, and will injure me in every way she can. If she is my enemy, then that is enough. No man or woman shall interfere with Harold Haxon, but what it shall cost them their—"

"Not loud, Haxy," interrupted a voice.

He wheeled round as he felt a hand laid on his shoulder, and faced Gil. Bret.

"Not so loud, Haxy. You mustn't go on that 'ere way, or you'll git into a fryin'-pan. The fellers' back to the restaurant was lookin' after you, as you was grumblin' 'bout somethin', an' one says you was crazy."

"You are punctual, Bret"—looking at his watch, which indicated ten precisely.

"Yes. Though we aren't at the place of meetin'."

"Well?"—resuming his seat—"there ain't nothin' particular the matter; on'y it's queer to me 'at this'ere place should give a'choo!"

"An echo?"

"Jes' so. I heard them 'ere words echoed, as plain as if I'd said 'em over ag'in."

"The Black Crescent?"

"Yes, sir. But don't forget the words now—Black Crescent. Tell ole Forde you want that 'ere article. Tell 'im you must have it."

"I shall do so. What has that to do with our gettin' money?"

Bret looked at him in a peculiar way.

"You jus' do as I tell you, now, and I'll show you somethin'."

"I will not!"

Haxon was wondering what such a thing as that mentioned could have to do with their "sink or swim" on the life of life; when the bruiser added, as he swallowed the last mouthful:

"But there's one *thing* 'bout it, Haxy."

"Well?"

"You mustn't insist too much on havin' the article, or maybe we'll find our plans a-goin' up in an explosion!"

"I must not insist! Explain."

"The ole cuse sets a good deal by that 'ere crescent, an' it's all 'cause he's full o' superst

er than ever. "You know Bessie Raynor?"

He hesitated and looked at her. "Yes."

Quick as lightning the old woman raised her head.

"Ay, Lorin, and a noble girl she is!" she said. "Her old father was as honest a man as ever Lawrence saw or will see. Silas Raynor was, in times dead and gone, alas! a sutor of mine."

"Well, mother, 'tis of Bessie I would speak. I will do so briefly and frankly. I have known her since she was a child. She is scarcely more now, though she has woman's heart and susceptibilities. More than once has my heart warmed toward her, and my blood has coursed along more briskly as I have held her by the hand, and gazed into her soft, dreamy eyes. In a word, mother, I have, at times, fancied I loved Bessie Raynor. Do not interrupt me, mother; do not frown at me. I must speak the truth. I say 'fancied' I spoke truthfully; when I question myself, I find that it was all fancy—that I do not love Bessie Raynor."

"Do not love Bessie? And why, Lorin?" demanded Mother Moll, in an unmusically harsh voice.

"Why, mother, I am not honest to love two women. If I love Minerva Ames, I can not love Bessie Raynor. *I do love Minerva.*"

"You are a foolish boy, Lorin, and you would stand in your own light. Minerva Ames is not worthy of you, my darling boy—nay! do not interrupt me. Your old mother speaks what she *knows* to be the truth. I say Minerva Ames is not worthy to be your wife, and her father is not a fitting person to own such a son-in-law as you."

"Oh, mother, how can you talk thus? Minerva is soft, gentle and—"

"Granted; but she has a double tongue and a deceitful heart! Think you, Lorin Gray, and her eyes flashed, 'that I can be deceived? No! no! I already knew the tale you have told me—ay! before you opened your mouth. And I know, too, that Minerva Ames is playing with you—I repeat it: playing with you. She would have your homage, but she would have Malcolm Arlington's money!"

"Malcolm Arlington! Why, mother?"

"I speak the truth, Lorin. I tell you that, in company with that rich banker, she rode by this house, not two hours since. Ha! the arrow strikes, does it? Yet 'tis a merciful shaft."

"Oh! mother! mother!" and the young man staggered to his feet.

Softly the old woman laid her hand on his arm and drew him to his seat.

"Listen, my son; I would talk with you."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CROSSING THE PALM.

BESSIE RAYNOR, this same night, sat by the bedside of her brother. There was a feverishness about his hands and face which made her solicitous in regard to him. Her habitually-sad looks rested upon her face.

Ross saw her gaze fixed upon him.

"Be not uneasy about me, Bessie," he said, in a gentle voice, as a faint smile struggled to his face. "Do not be uneasy about me. You know I slept well last night. The doctor said this morning that I was getting along well."

Poor Ross! he thought he was the only cause of solicitude in Bessie's bosom.

Bessie could not shut her eyes to the fact; the little stock of money they had was going fast. The funeral expense, though light in itself, had been heavy when the small amount in the house was taken into consideration.

"I am worried about you, brother," at length she said, "and I am worried about other matters, too. Ross, do you know we have not five dollars in the house. Alas!"

The cripple looked earnestly at her, and a shade of pain came to his face. But then a smile played triumphantly around his mouth as he said:

"Bessie, have you forgotten what you told me of poor papa?—what he told you about the chest, and—"

"No! no!" interrupted his sister. "I had not forgotten; but—" She paused, as her countenance darkened. "I have my doubts, Ross—I do not like to think of that cheat. Something seems to whisper in my ear that we will be disappointed—that poor papa's brain was confused—that he spoke in idle words."

"Oh, Bessie, how can you talk so? Go now, and open the chest. We will never go to the horrid null, with its clatter and roar, again."

Bessie half started to her feet, as her brother's earnest words fell on her ear.

"The key, Ross! the key!" she murmured. "That terrible stroke of lightning, it was then I lost the key. I have searched for it since, in vain. But I'll go and look again. Ah! if we can find the old peacock, and, in it, the papers then we can be happy—we will leave the mill."

A fire sparkled in her eyes, and a deep glow of exultation, of high hope, of longing for happiness, illumined her cheek. She arose and left the room.

A half-hour elapsed ere she returned. When she entered the apartment again, Ross saw in her every movement the failure of her search.

"I have not found the key, Bessie?"

"No; I have searched high and low, in every nook and corner for it. It is gone!"

"Break open the lid with an ax," said Ross, resolutely.

Bessie started at the proposition.

"Splinter the lid, Bessie!" urged Ross.

His sister hesitated no longer. She ran down-stairs, and in a moment returned, bringing with her a heavy ax. She seemed bent on taking the cripple's advice. She snatched the lamp and hurried out to the landing, leaving the door open. She placed the lamp near her. But she paused as she gazed on the old storm-battered, salt-stained chest. She thought of her father, of the many ocean leagues that old chest had traveled with him, and a choking sensation came to her throat.

But she nerves herself. The bright metal flashed for moment in the light and then fell with a crashing thud. The eye of the ax fell on the edge of the lid in which the lock was set. The lock, chain and hasp were stricken entirely away.

Like a tornado, Lorin Gray burst into the room.

"False! false woman! False, deceitful Minerva! I'll know the worst to-night!"

Unheeding his poor old mother, and her uplifted, appealing hands, he rushed from the room out into the dark night.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 73.)

AN old farmer, whose son had lately died, was visited by a neighbor, who began to console with him on his loss. "My loss!" exclaimed the father; "no such thing; it was his own loss—he was of age."

Lorin Gray leaned toward his mother, and, now that he had unburdened her feet. A low wail broke from her lips, as she reeled into her brother's room and sunk, moaning to the floor.

The chest was empty!

Lorin Gray leaned toward his mother, and, now that he had unburdened

the tale which was weighing him down, he looked her calmly in the face.

"I can tell of the past, my son," she began, "and I can read of the future. I know you do not believe it, and that you, with your book-learning, endeavor to persuade me to abandon my notions. *Notions!* Does not that past tell what I can do? Yet, of myself I have not the power; it comes from a higher source. But, listen, Lorin; do not smile at me or interrupt me. I will tell you of the future; I will spread before you a picture which you will understand. I do so, to warn you. I'll not speak of Bessie Raynor or Minerva Ames, though already I know their future. Suffice it to say that every thing will work well. But, listen."

As she spoke, she arose, reached down from the mantel an old-fashioned sand-glass, set on hour pivots. This she placed on the floor near her, inverting it, so that the sand would trickle through the lower chamber of the instrument.

Having done this, she went to the dresser and took out a handful of salt. This, with a small quantity of charcoal, which she obtained from a vessel on the mantel, she laid in a shovel. Sprinkling over the little heap tablespoonful of alcohol, she resumed her seat.

For a moment the strange old woman muttered some incoherent and half inaudible words to herself. Then, suddenly extinguishing the lamp, she lit a wisp of paper by the red coals in the stove, and applied it to the contents of the shovel, which she was now holding above the sand-glass.

Instantly a ghastly, sickly gleam burst in the room, and lit up every thing with a spectral, corpse-like glamour.

"Ay! ay!" she began, in a low, distinct voice, her head thrown back, and her eyes gazing at the up-curving fumes, "it comes again! A raw, windy day, snow-clouds in the air! The white drapery on the earth! Wild winds through the streets, and along the river! A mighty crash! A mountain of smoke, and then, oh, God! flame! flame!" The sky red with the up-licking fire, and rent with piercing cries, and moans, and wails, and curses, and prayers! The pallid moon, shining ghastly on a dead-smoking ruin! Oh! God, shut out, shut out the view!"

With a sudden movement she emptied the contents of the shovel and arose.

Then, as she staggered for a moment, she waited in the young man's ear:

"Tis the 'PEMBERTON,' Lorin. Shut it and be safe! When the snow-king—Ha!"

She suddenly paused, as at that moment the crunch of carriage-wheels sounded in front of the house. The sound ceased; the carriage had stopped. Then a female voice, echoing like a silver clarion, exclaimed:

"This is the place, Mr. Arlington—the witch's house! Let us go in, and have our fortunes told."

Then, in reply, echoed the deep, full tones of a man, giving a glad assent.

Mother Moll trembled.

"Away with you, Lorin!" she whispered. "Quick! into the other room there, and listen. She comes!"

Lorin Gray turned at once, as a wild, fearing shudder passed over his frame, and strode into the apartment designated.

He had heard the words, and he knew the voice.

Just as he had closed the door, leaving it slightly ajar, two figures, showing dimly in the uncertain light, entered the room, in which remained Mother Moll. The old woman had just succeeded in relighting the lamp.

"Ha! what a villainous odor!" said Minerva Ames, as she entered the apartment.

"Yes, indeed!" echoed Malcolm Arlington, who stood just behind her.

"Your servant, miss and sir," said Mother Moll, humbly, bowing low. "What would you have of the old fortune-teller, that thus honor her lowly abode?" and she eyed her guests keenly.

"We were out riding, good dame, and being near your house, we thought we would pay you a visit," said Minerva, smiling blandly.

"You can tell fortunes, I believe?" said Arlington, as a slight sneer broke over his mustached lip.

"I can," replied the young man, firmly.

"That will do."

"And now, gentlemen of the jury, I will present a proof to you that a secret understanding existed between the prisoner at the bar and the murdered man; that he had a hold upon her; that she was paying him even if he was drunk."

"You see the value of this evidence, gentlemen of the jury; SUP-PO-SITION!" and the lawyer laid a decided emphasis on the word.

"The moon was once supposed to be made of green cheese; perhaps it is, but I don't believe, gentlemen of the jury, that you believe it?" Then Rennet sat down, perfectly satisfied. One thing though puzzled him; the face of Judge Jones never lost its confident expression.

"You are under oath, Mr. Rennet, and you declare to the best of your knowledge and belief that when Gains Tendail, the murdered man, said that he had a secret concerning some one, that he referred to the lady of the Eldorado?" the Judge asked, with measured accent.

"I do," replied the young man, firmly.

"How gave you to understand?"

"By inference."

"Ah!" and the old lawyer glanced at the jury as if to call their especial attention to his words, "he did not say that he possessed a secret concerning Miss Jinnie?"

"Not in those words; no."

"But you guessed that he referred to her?"

"Yes."

"What gave that opinion?"

"Because he said that hereafter he would have the best room in the Eldorado—"

"Nothing in that," interrupted the lawyer.

"The Eldorado is the best house in town; a man with money would naturally say that he would have the best room in the best hotel, without reference to who kept it."

"Then, I asked him openly if the secret concerned Miss Jinnie?"

"And he answered yes?"

"No; he evaded the question and said that I couldn't pump him even if he was drunk."

"You are under oath, Mr. Rennet, and you declare to the best of your knowledge and belief that when Gains Tendail, the murdered man, said that he had a secret concerning some one, that he referred to the lady of the Eldorado?" the Judge asked, with measured accent.

"I do," replied the young man, firmly.

"That will do."

"Young Rennet retired.

"And now, gentlemen of the jury, I will present a proof to you that a secret understanding existed between the prisoner at the bar and the murdered man; that he had a hold upon her; that she was paying him even if he was drunk."

"I protest against the authority of this court. You have no legal right to try this girl!" Rennet cried, excitedly.

"Judge Lynch gives the right," replied Jones, sternly. "Gentlemen of the jury, you will retire and deliberate upon your verdict. Gentlemen of the guard, clear the room!"

And thus the trial ended. The citizens gathered in knots; ominous words were freely bandied around.

CHAPTER XL.

AN UNEXPECTED WITNESS.

The jury were conveyed under guard to a neighboring shanty.

The Judge posted sentinels around the express office, and stationed ten of the armed men at the door. It was plain that he feared a rescue.

Jinnie remained alone in the office.

After attending to the disposition of his forces, the Judge entered the office again.

"Guess he's going to try and get her to make a clean breast of it," one of the men at the door remarked, as the Judge closed out behind him.

Jinnie sat by the Judge's desk, her head resting on her arm. She looked up in astonishment when she saw who it was. Her face fully expressed her amazement.

The Judge drew a folded paper from his pocket-book, and opened it slowly.

"This paper was found by Mr. Rennet in the trunk of the prisoner, in her room at the Eldorado. I was present, and in order that there should be no doubt, I caused Mr. Rennet to write his name on the paper."

All wondered at the varying expressions upon her face, for almost every eye in the room was fixed upon her paper.

When the Judge produced the little folded page, a burning blush swept over the face of the girl, but as he continued on in his speech, it was succeeded by a pallid hue.

"I will first read what is written on the paper aloud, and then submit it to your jury."

Jinnie leaned forward in breathless astonishment, her lips slightly apart and her eyes dilated with amazement.

"Miss JINNIE:—The money you gave me is gone and I want more. I have come to the conclusion that you didn't pay half well enough. Why I have only to speak and you will be ruined forever. If you want me to keep my mouth shut, you must pony up. Take an early opportunity to see me, or I shall be obliged to call upon you. Spur City would be slightly annoyed if I knew what I know. I don't want to make any trouble, but money I must have. You are making plenty; spare a little for me, or else I shall be obliged to enlighten the world you to think that I would do aught to harm you?"

"Because you act that way," the girl replied, simply.

"You misconstrue my acts. I am your friend—more than that, I love you. I told you so once before."

"You take a queer way to show it," Jinnie answered. "I should think that you hated rather than loved me."

"Again you are wrong. I can and will explain every thing," he said, earnestly.

"I have taken the lead in this affair so that I might control it—so that I might give you from the danger that threatens you."

"Save me?" Jinnie said, incredulously.

"Yes; you do not believe me?"

BEYOND THE STARS.

BY ST. ELMO.

Beyond the stars lies a mystical land,
Beautiful, gorgeous, magnificent, grand;
Where the wild birds carol sweet songs by day,
And the dolphins sport 'mid the glittering spray;
Where the sweet flowers wave o'er the dark morn-

ing stars;
And the myrtle tangles the narrow pass:
Where the still, gray rocks, with their haughty crests,
Embrace with their arms the wild eagle's nests.

In the midst of this land, a crystal lake,
Fringed with a circle of dark-green trees,
A shadowed path on which the wild birds did break,
Gentle by the breath of the whispering breeze;
And a delicate island, softly furled.

Its dark-green fringe 'mid a sea of fire,
Where the jeweled rays of the sunlight curled,
Like the flames around some funeral pyre.

A delicate grotto with sea-moss dressed,
And snow-white pearls in its coral bough,
Where the dewdrops soft, on the leaves had pressed
A dewy path to the grotto of the sun;

A man's fair hair, as the legend tells,
With the silver spray in her midnight bair,
Sprung from the call of the ethin bells.

This spiritual maid, with her dark-blue eyes,
Was the destined queen of this fair land.

But there came afar from the Southern skies
An outlawed chief with his robber band,

And they tore the maid from her pearly cave,
And the grotto with its silver wall

Sang a mournful o'er the grass-grown grave,
That lies in that flower-enchanted vale.

When the midnight stars, with their eyes of fire,
Look down from their azure throne in high,

And the shadows tangle the myrtle's wire,
Leaving behind the trace of a sigh—

Then a specter dressed in its robes of white,
With blue eyes wrapped in a cloud of mist,

Froth softly about in the darkened light,
On the emerald shore its feet have kissed.

In the Wilderness.

IV.—THE WILDWOOD GRAVE.

Next day the party were ready for new adventures. "Gustus, in a suit of the roughest kind of slops, accompanied the expedition. His fishing-rod had been repaired by Ben, and he presented a queer appearance in a pair of neither garments which barely reached the tops of the high boots he had borrowed, and a coat which had been through three fishing expeditions in the North Woods. The boots were too large for him, and his thin legs wabbled about in the wide tops in a very ridiculous manner, which drew a smile from his companions, which they did not try to suppress.

"You are the very beau ideal of a fisherman," Gustus, my boy," said Viator. "I have no doubt you will win your spurs to-day. How would you like to have Maud Bretton see you now?"

"Don't mention it," said Gustus, with a shudder. "I could not bear it."

The party were not bent for rift-fishing to-day, but for a long stretch of deep water below, a splendid place for flying. They reached the fishing-ground, prepared their casts, and the fun grew fast and furious. As usual, poor Gustus was in bad luck. His first cast was a failure, and when he retrieved it, his leader became hopelessly entangled in a branch which overhanging the creek. He was quite alone, for the party had separated, two on each side of the stream, some distance above and below him.

"Ridiculous!" muttered Gustus. "I must have it down."

He caught up a broken branch with a hooked piece on it, and grappled the pine bough, drawing it gradually downward with one hand, while he reached for his line with the other. Twice he touched it, and as often as he did so the branch swerved away from him. At last he grasped it angrily, losing patience, and a sharp cry of pain followed, and repeated cries brought back the fishermen on a run, and they beheld a sight which was so ludicrous in spite of the pain the victim was sustaining, that a universal shout of laughter burst from all. Behold Gustus, standing upon tip-toe, grasping the crooked stick with which he had drawn down the branch with all his strength, his other arm stretched to its utmost extent, and the point of a sharp hook through the muscles of his forefinger. His face was distorted by rage and pain, and Ben sprung to the rescue, aided by Scribbler. The latter climbed the tree, and put his foot upon the branch, and bent it down so that Ben severed it by a single cut from his hunting-knife. The process of removing the hook was simple but not pleasant, but was performed quickly and skillfully by the old guide. Cutting the fly from the leader, he cut off the feathers and thread, leaving the shank of the hook bare. This done, he forced the point of the hook through the flesh and drew it from the wound, amid howls of agony from Gustus.

"There," said he, "shut up. That's a mere flea-bite. Seems to me nothing suits you but to git into trouble. Tain't pleasant, I know, but it's the fortune of war. I remember the first time I ever got a hook into me. The old woman didn't want me to go a-fishing, but I was bound to go. I was setting on a log, putting on a hook, and my line was laying on the ground behind me. She grabbed the line and tried to pull it away from me, just as I put it in my mouth to wet the loops, and if she didn't hook me clean through the lower lip I don't want a cent. It felt good, you bet, and father cut it out just as I took the hook out of Greeny here, and it was fun while it lasted. I told you before that you'll pull, too heavy on that big fly one of these days."

Gustus, with undiminished courage, replaced the fly he had lost, and the party again separated, and Gustus, proceeding with greater care, managed to land a few medium-sized trout without any further mishap. The party gathered for their mid-day lunch upon a piece of level turf, and ate with the appetites of fishermen. Just in front of them, by the side of the stream, was an oblong mound, which old Ben seemed to avoid as he stepped about, and Scribbler noticed it.

"Why do you avoid the spot?" he said. "Because it is a grave," replied Ben, solemnly; "the grave of an old guide."

"Who was he, Ben?"

A half-breed that used to guide fishermen, as I do now. They called him, Injun Joe, and a straighter or a stronger man did n't walk the woods. I've been out with him myself time and ag'in, and I must say that the Injun was a likely feller and a good hand at a scout. He were killed—killed suddenly—as it were, in a minute."

"Tell us about it, Ben," said Scribbler. "I think the foundation for a yarn can be found in this grass-grown sod."

"It was seven year back that it happened, in the spring of the year. A large party had come up from below, and when they came to Miller's shanty, where we started from after you left my house, they hired another guide, one Ned Foster, a black-looking feller from the West, that nat'rally hated an Injun like pizen, and of course he was down on Joe. I didn't like it that there should be quarreling in the party, but I know'd Joe was good-natured, and would stand a good deal before he'd hit back.

Things went on poopy well for three or four days, though Ned was always flinging out at Joe, but he only laughed at it. One night we was camped here on this flat where this chap hooked himself, and maybe we passed the whisky a trifle too often; I dunno; anyway, Ned began to blow about the Injuns and how they was poor, sneaking, pizen, miserable cusses, not fairly worth their salt.

As a gen'r'l rule I agree with him, but it wasn't so great of Injun Joe, who 'armed his livin' honestly. But Ned bore mighty hard on him, and kept drinking all the time, till arter a while they got to hot words, and Ned struck the half-breed. Lord! afore he had time to think, he was laying on the ground, with the mark of a hatchet on his head, and I'm thinking if we hadn't stepped in, Joe would have raised his ha'r. He were mad enough for any thing. When Ned came to himself he was sober enough, and one of the gentlemen spoke up and said that they would get along without his help, and he might go home as soon as he liked.

"Then you think more of the cussed Injun than you do of a white, eh?" said Ned.

"You began the quarrel," said the gentleman.

"Joe would never have laid a finger on you if you had minded your own affairs. In the morning I will pay you, and you may go."

"I'm thinking I'd better go to-night," said Ned, as he took up his rifle. "Joe, you red billy, I'll pay you. As true as I'm talking to you, you'll never see another sun-set."

"I thought then he didn't mean what he said, but Joe looked frightened a little, for he knew Foster had a bad heart. We was on the march next day arly, and Joe got away from the rest, slyng away to fish by himself, Injun fashion. I was about forty rod below, when I heared a rifle, and run up. Joe was lying under that tree where you are sitting, Square Viator, shot through the heart. Of course it was Ned Foster done it, but from that day to this no man has ever seen his face in the North Woods. I dunno where he is, but, if I was to die, I'd swear he murdered Injun Joe, and ought to be hung for the crime. Pass that pie this way; I think I kin worry a little of it down."

And while they smoked their after-dinner pipes, and "Gustus slept in the shade, the busy pencil of Scribbler was at work on a sketch of the "Guide's Grave." An hour after they were again afoot, tramping down the shining stream.

Love in the Farm-house.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

"Or all incomprehensible people, Ida Velmer, I declare you take the lead! Here you are, your trunks packed, your traveling dress lying ready to don, and you not yet decided where you are going!"

And Christine Raceworth, Ida's special friend, plumped herself down in the one easy-chair left in Miss Velmer's dressing-room.

Ida laughed—a low, joyous laugh it was, that somehow did one good to hear it; that certainly made you admire her, on account of the charming dimples that peeped from her pink cheeks, and because of the perfect tiny teeth she displayed.

Yes, Ida Velmer was undeniably pretty; besides, she was rich; and, more than all, very independent in all her ways and "whims," of which this last, according to Christine, was the most eccentric.

"Why, child, you'll never be able to secure a decent suite of rooms with no more notice than it seems you are going to give there's Mrs. Austen telephoned two weeks ahead for her, and then, only got them!"

Ida was twisting a long, loose curl that hung between the plaits of her hair—golden-brown hair it was, too—and listened very complacently to her friend's remarks.

"But, Mrs. Austen went to Saratoga, you know, and I'm not going there."

"It will be just the same at Newport or Long Branch—"

"Long Branch" and Ida's little mouth curled contemptuously. "I'm just sick of the sound of the name! I can't see how any sensible person would go there to be mixed up in the miscellaneous crowd that patronizes it. And—when I recall the means of transit—that—well, I will say nothing further, only I would be paid to suffer two months at the Branch!"

"Might I inquire where you will go?"

Christine asked a little impatiently, and then smiled at her answer.

"I have this minute decided where to direct my baggage. Hand me those cards, Tiny, and that fountain pen."

And Ida hastily wrote— "Berrybank, New Jersey," on the three blank cards.

"There," she exclaimed, triumphantly, "I am going to Berrybank, to my cousin Joann's. I never thought of it until this very moment. And if she won't have me, or hasn't room, I'll find some other quiet country place; for I'm just disgusted with the city, and fashions, and follies."

"Particularly Chauncey Vere." Tiny's dry tone brought the vivid blushes to Ida's face, but she answered hotly enough.

"Yes, and Mr. Vere particularly! He's no better than all the rest, a good dancer, whose highest qualification consists in making an unexpected bow, and cutivating a set of Dundreary whiskers."

And that contemptuous little curl was plainly visible on Ida's lips. Christine smiled in a certain superior way she had.

"Well, my dear, I am sure everybody thinks you are going to marry Mr. Vere—you've flirted scandalously."

"Then everybody will be mistaken; and I like him, first-rate—would like him better if he had more brains and less—What's that? who slammed that hall door?"

"Oh, it's one of the maids—what were you saying, Ida?"

"I forgot now. If it isn't ten o'clock—Yes, there's the expressman for my trunks. Just tell him to take them to the Cortlandt

street ferry, Christine, and I'll dress while the carriage is coming round."

A quiet little country station; a long, straight road, bordered by rustling maples and greenest grass; broad fields stretching away on every side, and a vast apple orchard in the distance.

A sweet, delicious calm rested over every thing; a sort of "religious rest," that went straight to Ida Velmer's heart as she stood on the little dingy platform, after the train had crept slowly on—it was an "accommodation"—the express had left an hour earlier and passed long ago.

There was no one at Berrybank station to meet her—she had not expected it, of course—and which way to go was a sore puzzle. But Ida sat down on one of her trunks, and took a mental survey, that was suddenly broken in upon by the sound of carriage-wheels; and looking up she saw a gentleman driving leisurely along in an exquisite little phaeton.

Impulsiveness was one of Ida's greatest charms—hence the look of surprise and admiration in the gentleman's grave eyes as she addressed him.

"I beg pardon, but will you be so kind as to tell me the way to Farmer Markins?"

Then, as she met freely those grave, splendid eyes, she gave a little start, and exclaimed, "Oh!"

The gentleman smiled.

"It is three miles further on in the direction I am going. If I might venture, I would be proud to take you there. Perhaps you will not think it amiss when I inform you I am not so great a stranger as you think; you are Miss Ida Velmer? I recognize you from a photograph my cousin has—Chauncey Vere—also my name.

May I assist you?"

So engaged was the attention of the vast audience, that no one noticed the dark figure which stole into the chapel immediately after them, and sat quietly down within the sound of the minister's calm, even voice.

The marriage service of the Episcopal church, so solemn, so impressive, so elaborate, occupied almost twenty minutes, and then the twain were declared man and wife. The old minister knew the bride very intimately, and instead of dismissing the assemblage at once, he proceeded to admonish the young couple to remember the vows they had just registered; to lead an honest, pure life; to bear with each other's failings kindly, and, if God should please to bless their union with children, to see to it that they were raised within the pale of the church.

Saying this, he prayed God to bless them both, and then followed the two surprised acolytes into the vestry.

The bridal party stopped to receive many congratulations; and then, a little tired and worn with excitement, walked down the aisle toward the door.

Just as they reached the vestibule the dark figure stood directly in their path, her face concealed by the folds of a black, mourning veil.

Chauncey put out his hand and touched her on the shoulder.

"Please stand aside," he said.

She lifted up the veil and glared into his eyes.

He started wildly back; it was the face of the dead—it was the face of Elmer Gregg! Before he could speak, she disappeared in the snow-drifts which covered the streets, and he, uttering a faint scream, fainted and fell all in a heap, at the feet of his new-made wife.

A scene of wild confusion followed; Grace, of all the party, recognized the true cause of her husband's illness, and this possibly nerveled her to bend over him and whisper:

"Don't fear, Chauncey dearest; that bad woman is gone."

"Gone! gone!" he muttered, staring wildly up into Grace's face, and then crowing back the next instant as he met her honest gaze, like a moral coward as he was.

"Why, what is wrong?" asked Lucy, excitedly, bending over her brother.

"Nothing," answered Grace, with rare presence of mind; "nothing—only a slight attack of epilepsy."

She said this loud enough for every one to hear distinctly, and soon a dozen tongues were presaging her words to a hundred pairs of ears.

Leaning on Robert Alward's shoulder, Chauncey Watterson managed to reach the carriage, and by the time they reached the Alward mansion he was wholly recovered from the shock he had received; although, during the entire evening, he was excited and nervous—so much so, indeed, that Grace advised him to the utmost quiet.

It looked very strange to see a broad-shouldered, robust man like Chauncey trembling like a school-girl, and it was only Grace Watterson's pride that kept her from crying through sheer mortification.

Of course Chauncey's illness was noised abroad among the guests, and some disappointed girls shrugged their shoulders and laughed slyly; while dowagers, with marriageable daughters, thought a man subject to fits would never be able to make much of a show in the world, and were really glad to have their Sophie's and Maria's still on hand.

But Chauncey, amid all this gossip and hypocrisy, was suffering keenly. The woman whom he had supposed sleeping under six foot of earth, in Delville graveyard, had stood before him and glared into his eyes like a horrid specter in the first few moments of his married life—there, amid the laughing throng where a spirit good or evil, would never have shown itself at all. Sometimes he almost convinced himself that it was the shade of Elmer; then he would be willing to testify it was her in the flesh, and anon he would drive away all these by stiffly asserting that it was some person whom his fancy at that moment clothed with the features of the dead. This appeared altogether the most reasonable solution of the mystery, and before the carriage whisked them off to the midnight train which was to bear them to St. Louis, he had quite satisfied himself that this was really the case.

At St. Louis the twain left the rail, and going aboard a magnificent Western steamboat, bound for St. Paul, settled down to enjoy the sweets of love and travel.

Chauncey Watterson did not love his young wife with that fierce, devouring passion which he had given to Elmer Gregg; but if there was less of the impetuous element in the affection he gave to Grace, there was more respect, and, perhaps greater depth, too.

Grace was very different from Elmer. While the latter was regal, queenly, proud; the former was graceful, supple, yielding—all

Out in the World:

THE FOUNDLING OF RAT ROW.

A ROMANCE OF CINCINNATI.

BY BARTLEY T. CAMPBELL,

AUTHOR OF "IN THE WEB," ETC., ETC.

would drag you down to sin and folly, I will lead you up the narrow path of righteousness, to honor and respectability. She shall be made to feel the power of a wife's influence—that she shall."

She nestled close to his breast, and he kissed and blessed her.

"You are, indeed, my guardian angel," he said, and then he fancied she was content, and he happy.

CHAPTER XV.

MISS ROMNEY TAGGART.

WHEN Miss Romney Taggart had reached her sixth year, she was acknowledged on all sides to be exceedingly precocious, and as pretty as a picture—that is, when her face was clean enough to show the milky whiteness of her neck and shoulders, and the tangled drifts of golden hair did not obscure the liquid blue of her big, beautiful eyes! She was not a dirty child. There were plenty in and around Rat Row on whom the dirt of the streets was allowed to remain until it became as hard as enamel, but Romney Taggart was scoured in a tub of suds every night, and went back to her maternal employment of making mud-pies in the gutters, fresh from the comb and iron.

It seemed as if she rioted in mud, and she was never known to complain of weariness in kneading the tough clay on the levee into loaves; or of twisting straw wreathes into the silken meshes of her hair.

Mrs. Taggart often threatened to whip her for being "such a dirty little thing"; but, when the hour for putting the threat into execution would arrive, Van would always enter a strong plea in extenuation, and Miss Romney invariably escaped a merited chastisement.

It was these frequent interpositions on his part that led the child to look up to him as a protector; and sometimes, when she would be under sentence for some willful act or omission, she would post herself on the door of her humble home, and wait anxiously for the advent of her champion. Then, when Van would appear at last, she would run to him, place her soiled, be-dimpled arms about his waist, and say, "Oh, Van, p'ease, mussah's doin' to lick me." Then the boy would pat the girl gently upon the head, and ask her what she had been doing now.

"Nussin'" was the ever-recurring reply; and then the little rogue would archly add: "Mussah don't want me to yike you, Van, and Iesse I will, she dit mad at me."

The boy knew how false this was; and had, too, a well-defined idea that it was very naughty in Romney to fib in that neckless way, but then the compliment conveyed in her words sounded so sweetly from the cherry lips, that he could not find it in his heart to reprimand her.

It may be seen from this, that Miss Taggart was getting along in the world at an amazingly rapid rate; and that Van Taggart thought the world and all of his little protege.

If she was bad and willful all day, in the evening she was forced to be on her good behavior, in order that Van might instruct her in the mysteries of the violin. He was patient—very patient—with her, and after she had conquered the gamut her strides were very rapid, until at length she could play almost as well as Van. Her voice was rich, flexible, and sympathetic, and Mrs. Taggart taught her enough vocalism to warrant Van in taking her with him on his daily rounds.

She clapped her hands gleefully when Mrs. Taggart tied the cherry-colored ribbons of her broad hat under her pink chin, for the first time, and handed her down poor little dead Romney's fiddle.

"Oh, I'm so glad to git out with you, Van!" she said; "an' we'll have just the goodest time, too; won't we?"

"Yes, but you mustn't romp as yer do down here at the 'Row," answered Van; "p'lease I'll take yer up, if yer do."

This admonition had the desired effect, and during the first day of Romney Taggart's public life in the streets, she was very quiet and demure. The truth is she was overawed by the crowds which collected about them everywhere they stopped; and by the grandeur of the houses, and the elegance of the ladies who occasionally paused to admire the wee musician, and listen to her rich, sweet voice ere they dropped the penny which she had not yet learned to value.

Day by day, however, she grew familiar with the rounds, and with the fashionable people, and although always a trifle shy in the streets, she learned to raise her voice loud enough to win for her the admiration of every one who stopped an instant to listen to the itinerant minstrel as they strolled along.

In this way three years passed, and Romney was eight, and Van almost seventeen. He felt his years keenly, and being a spirited fellow, was growing ashamed of his employment, and desired to change it for something more dignified and remunerative.

In these three years he had improved himself very considerably. Instead of retiring early, as Romney always did, he usually remained up until midnight to read and study, and now he had progressed far enough to take Romney in charge, and he did. She was a trifle slow to learn at first; had a fixed aversion to certain letters in the alphabet, and after conquering these, took an active delight in dodging big words.

Mrs. Taggart, by means of bribes in the shape of new trinkets and ribbons, coaxed her through the Second Reader, and this attained, Romney took to study with a zest, and promised, ere long, to leave Van behind.

The latter was very proud of his sister, and her improvement gave him great joy. But he did not like to see her playing in the streets any more, and one night he started his mother by saying:

"Mother, after this week Romney shan't go on the street any more. I've made my mind up on that."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Mrs. Taggart; "but what will the girl do?"

"Well, I don't know," was the reply.

"Nothing, I guess."

"Nothing? But we are poor, you know, and—"

"I don't care," interrupted the boy; "it ain't no place for a little girl; and I'm gettin' ashamed of myself."

"You?"

"Yes, me. It don't look well, nolow, for a big, burly boy like me to go around playing a fiddle in the streets—it looks too much like beggin' one's living. Don't you think so?"

No, Mrs. Taggart did not think so; but she would gladly have him exchange his

present occupation for something more congenial and better suited to his years.

"Well, then, I'm going to change it mighty soon," he said, determinedly. "I'm going to be a man!"

The matter was dropped then, and the next day Van and Romney were on the tramp as before.

It was a bright, lovely day in early spring, and the streets were thronged with strollers and people of leisure, who seemed quite willing to hear good music, and satisfied to pay well for it, too. As usual, the labors of the day were supplemented or brought to a close by a tour around the steamboat landing.

There were a great many boats between the foot of Vine street and Broadway in those days, and with the shouting of mates; the singing of dusky roostabouts; the rumbling of wagons; the lumbering of drays; the screaming of steam whistles, and the clanging of bells, there was enough noise to deafen every ear in the city. Yet, amid all this tumult, there was left still a desire for music of a different type; for more dulcet strains; and Van and Romney's five o'clock concerts were generally great successes, both in an artistic and pecuniary sense.

On the evening of this spring day there was the greatest activity on the wharf, and no little excitement, owing to the fact that the new Magnolia was to leave at five o'clock for St. Louis on her first trip.

She was a splendid craft, and sat upon the waters like a fairy palace—all white and gold.

"Let us go aboard," said Van, after they had surveyed her from the shore for some time, "and see what she looks like inside."

Romney was so used to obeying him that he gave him her hand at once, and led her over the gangway, and up the stairs into the cabin.

It was a charming sight to the two children; the carvings looking like crusted snow overhead; the landscape wonders on the state-room doors; while the tall mirrors in the ladies' cabin reflected back all these splendors, and seemed to enhance them a hundred-fold.

"Oh! ain't it nice?" exclaimed Romney, clapping her hands. "Oh, ain't it so nice?"

Yes, Van thought it very beautiful, but he was not so enthusiastic as his companion, who stood, with mouth and eyes wide agape, drinking in the enchantment about her.

"Oh, I could stay here forever!" she said, again, but before Van could answer, Chauncy Watterson tapped him on the shoulder, and said:

"The ladies would be pleased to have you and your sister play something for them. Will you do it?"

"Yes, sir," replied Van, and the young musicians walked back to where Grace Watterson sat amid a crowd of gayly-attired ladies and gentlemen.

The children bowed awkwardly to their audience, and then began to play a soft, beautiful Italian air, full of tenderness and feeling.

Those who were chatting and laughing when the impromptu entertainment began ceased their frivolity when the sad voice of the music swelled up in all the roundness and ripeness of perfection, and there were tears in many eyes, including those of Grace Watterson, when the strains died away, like a mellow echo, at last.

Many bright silver pieces rewarded the effort, and while Van gathered them, Grace Watterson sat amid a crowd of gayly-attired ladies and gentlemen.

"No, ma'am," replied the girl; "we've no piano at home—only a fiddle."

The answer was so blunt, unaffected, and childlike withal, that Grace dropped down upon her knees, and, although childless herself, drew the pretty little dear to her bosom and kissed her on brow and cheek—never dreaming that the child she held so tightly in her arms belonged to Elinor Gregg and Chauncy Watterson, her husband.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 77.)

The Ocean Girl:

THE BOY BUCCANEER.

BY LAFAYETTE LAFOREST, AUTHOR OF "CRUISER CRUISE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CONFEDERATES MEET.

THE morning was fine, and the wind being fair, there was a very large proportion of the passengers on deck, to whom Ned had formally to be introduced, as an old acquaintance of the admiral's, who had unaccountably been found floating about the Downs on a couple of water-tight casks. This was enough for all present, and old and young, ladies fat, ladies thin, young and pretty, cadets, mids, all were glad to consider Ned one of them, though, as he murmured to himself, if they knew he was a pirate, they would have gladly headed him up in one of those very casks, and pitched him back again into the sea.

Soon the breeze was pretty strong from the north-east, a perfectly fair wind, which made the three topsails lift and swell, while the passengers looked white and blue, and all manner of colors. Still they knew not how to mend it, until at last, the wind freshening and the huge hull rolling before it, they gradually got below, or into the poop cabin, leaving the deck to the admiral, Ned and Loo, who was a capital sailor.

A little later the wind freshened more, so that royals had to be clewed up and furled, upon which Ned ran up the mizzen shrouds, stowed the mizzen royal, and made fast the gaskets. While aloft, he cast a wary eye around, and there, dead to windward, several points ahead, however, was the Ocean Girl. He knew her well—a sailor soon recognizes his ship; and coming down, sadly enough, returned to the quarter-deck, where he walked like the officer of the watch, every now and then casting a weather-look aloft.

The admiral was reading; Loo was with her governess, a lady-like person, Ned was told, who had not yet appeared in the cabin or on deck; the captain was giving orders to the steward, the first-officer was stirring about to see the men clear the deck of all lumber, so that the young buccaneer appeared in command. He was, however, scarcely conscious of the look of things around, being so bent on his own thoughts as scarcely to take note of time or any thing else.

He, however, from sheer habit—a habit acquired on board the Ocean Girl, where he was often in reality officer of the watch, when Captain Gantling and others were carousing—looked up every now and then at the sails, which, once or twice, he noticed shivering.

"Mind your helm," he said, sharply, without turning round; "steady so—port."

And then he walked on.

"Really you must be removed from the helm," continued Ned; "this will not do. See how the vessel is yawing about—port-steady so."

"Like old times, this," said a deep voice.

The young buccaneer turned.

"The young helm," he said, sharply, without turning round.

"Wouldn't you like just a bit of land, to grow violets and roses?" replied Ned, with a smile.

"Well, I might, you know. Have you ever read 'Paul and Virginia'?"

"Never."

"I must lend it to you. It is a charming book. They are on an island—not on a desert island—but that I should like. Why, fancy you and I and poor shipwrecked—wouldn't it be jolly?"

Now, whether Ned Drake thought the word somewhat out of place in a young lady's mouth, or from what reason we will not say, but he did not reply, and as he clutched the bulwarks with his ten fingers, his teeth chattered, and his face was ghastly pale.

A desert island!—shipwrecked! Who had suggested this?

"You are ill," suggested Loo, anxiously;

"you look like that night in the Channel, or I'll tell all I know about you, and have you under hatches," and with these words he walked away to meet Loo, who was coming out of the poop-cabin.

"The same, your honor."

"Then never speak to me again, or look at me again," said Ned Drake, hurriedly,

"or I'll tell all I know about you, and have you under hatches," and with these words he walked away to meet Loo, who was coming out of the poop-cabin.

"A spasm—it's over. I will walk forward," said Ned, moodily, and left the girl alone without another word.

The next day was very fine, and any one could see with half an eye they were advancing toward the tropics, where, what with the heat and other reasons, too long to give in detail, calms are so common. This was the hour the young buccaneer dreaded.

If while the old ocean slept, and the crew of the Duke of Kent kept a kind of anchor-watch, with their heads on their pillow, or what was worse, a watch of treachery and death, the buccaneers crept on the doomed ship, and mastered it, what would be his position?

A cold, dreary shiver passed over his whole frame, as with his heart in his mouth, he walked the deck.

There had been rain in the night, and the sea looked hot; the breeze though still in the same quarter, was lighter, the water bluer, but certain signs in the clouds, known only to the initiated, plainly indicated that there was more wind coming. This, however, was no consolation, as a brigantine like the Ocean Girl, would always outsail an Indian, though, if she carried on too long, she might run the risk of being capsized.

A thrill passed through the bosom of the young buccaneer at this thought, and yet, though it would end all his difficulties, he could not say he wished it. The man Gantling he owed a deep debt of gratitude to, even though he was a pirate, for personally he had been kind, though looming in the distance, from this same No Man's Land of the future, he began to foresee reasons for disliking him, perhaps of a darker nature than he had yet imagined. Then there was Dirlt, whose fidelity to his person was unimpeachable.

After breakfast the weather began to change. The clouds darkened to leeward, the sea was blacker, while some spray, an albatross, a stinkard or two, with some lazy gulls, began to waken up, as if they snuffed the storm. A regular school of porpoises tumbled and rolled about.

Ned Drake strolled forward to the heel of the bowsprit, carelessly to all appearance, but in truth to have a glance round in search of the vessel which haunted his waking thoughts, his night dreams, and floated before him at times, not on the blue waves, but in a red sea of blood. He cast a wary look around, but, detecting nothing, resumed his careless mien, looked through the head-boards into the pile of white foam that frothed up as she ploughed, and then was about to move aft when he heard words which made him pause.

"That 'ere cussed young reefer," said Jabez Grunn, with a fearful oath in addition to his nautical epithet, "gets over me. What is he here for? I he a spy on us, or has he cut and run?"

"Cut and run, most like; he's hand and glove with that blessed old tyrant of an admiral what guv Gantling such a lift once."

"Very like. We'll have a puff from east-ud afore long. This wind's night dead, and if that spindie-shanks goes aloft anywhere near me, cuss me if I don't pitch him right overboard. Right or wrong, he'll be out of it."

"Reef topsails," shouted one of the mates.

At the same moment every thing flutted.

"Mind your helm, Jones," called out the first officer; and then, seeing that she would not lie her course, and that the forward sails were aback, the men were set to work trimming sails; and while the wind was freshening, and the topsails flapping, and the booms heading, Ned Drake walked aft with a pale, stern face, that boded no good to the pirate crew.

It was like sailing in company with the Flying Dutchman, now that the young buccaneer began to understand his feelings. What with the Ocean Girl ever in sight, and the six ruffians among the crew, the position was most trying, as indeed it deserved to be, of all of us having sufficient natural sense to restrain us from entering upon an enterprise such as that of Ned Drake—a kind of wild cruise into No Man's Land, as it were.

Every day the young buccaneer became a greater favorite with the passengers, while to Sir Stephen Rawdon he was clearly a matter of deep and anxious interest. Loo looked up to and worshiped him as if he had been something superior to the rest of mankind. Under ordinary circumstances, this would have delighted Ned Drake; but, placed as he was, every act of kindness was a dagger planted in his heart. His health suffered, and though the breezy ocean and the fast warming sun kept him brown and rosy, he was thin, and evidently eaten away by the canker-worm of care.

Young as he was, with such a heavy responsibility on his mind, the effect was depressing indeed. He was not old enough to call sophistry to his aid. He had given a solemn promise, and without warning Captain Gantling, he felt bound to observe his oath.

"Honor among thieves" is an absurd and ridiculous saying, as there is none, petty larceny pilferers and others of their kidney always betraying one another when they can get any thing by it. Here were, however, no mean thieves in question, but men who, at the peril of their lives, filled their purses, chiefly from their national enemies, but on a pinch, not much regarding what flag flew at the gaff.

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AN OLD STORY SIGHTLY AL

laughed the admiral, "what do you mean?"

"I'm only a boy, sir," continued Ned, pointing to where a smooth, round-backed swell came out of a dirty thick jumble of a sky; "but I've seen that wild look before in these latitudes."

"And then, Master Edward?" said Sir Stephen, more seriously.

"There came a storm, as there comes now."

As he spoke, there fell a heavy drop or two of rain, there was heard a long-drawn sigh in the canvas aloft, then came a clapper of two or three carromades, as the sails hit against the yards, and then the rain fell in whole sheets and bucketfuls.

"You are indeed a sailor, Master Ned," said the admiral. "You must look alive, Stephen."

"Away there, furl royals, and close reef top-gallant-sails!" cried Dunbar, addressing the first officer.

"Ay, ay! sir."

And Edward, though he had made up his mind to interfere no more in the working of the ship, by a kind of instinct which seems part and parcel of the nature of an expert sailor boy, ran up the rigging, while the rain poured faster and faster, until the scupper holes could not let the water out. It was now so dark that no man could see his hand, and while the heavens sent down their deluge, Boreas began to stir; and before a man was out on the yards it blew strongly. Still, it was nothing serious, and man after man was at work at reefs-points and garbets.

Reefing, be it known, is by far the most exciting part of a seaman's duty. Once the hayards are let go, there can be no skulking. It must be done. If one is slow, another climbs over him. The first aloft goes to the weather earing—the second to the lee.

Edward had run along the foot-rope until he reached the extreme point of the yard-arm; where, as in old times, when he was officer of the buccaneer, he began to sing out to the men in true seaman fashion. The position can not be better illustrated than by a very simple explanation. Every boy, who has not had the opportunity of going to a seaport town, knows that the yard is a cross-beam, thicker in the middle than at the ends, which supports the sail. Well, in order to furl or reef, it is necessary for two men to sit astride on the narrow end with no support but the frall wood, and a foot-rope, on which the reefers stand. There, forty or fifty feet above the raging sea, they sit, see-sawing like boys at play, now one up, now the other down, just as the rolling waves dash them.

Just as Ned began to haul, the rain ceased as suddenly as it began—a common event in the tropics—and it became lighter—light enough, in fact, to make out the horizon.

"Yeo-oh!" said Ned.

"Where, sir?" responded a hoarse voice from the lee earing. The lad knew it was that of Jabez Grunn.

Ned was brave enough; but many a brave officer and general, who would meet any enemies in the field, has shuddered with horror at the idea of being shot in the back by his own men; and Edward, who would have headed a party of bandits with enthusiasm, had no idea of being murdered by a ruffian seaman pushing him off into the dark and seething waves.

The question now arose, whether the Yankee Dutchman had recognized him or not. His voice was rather shrill, and this, of itself, was enough to betray him. At all events, he determined to act in self-defense. The mates below kept roaring to the men to clew up and furl; which, with the wind and the hubbub of the vessel, rendered any call or collected action impossible.

All was done, and the men began running down the rigging, to be in readiness to perform any other maneuver necessary to the snuffing of the ship.

But, skulking flat against the rigging, Ned distinctly saw Grunn, his glittering eyes fixed upon him, like those of a cat upon a mouse. Now, to hail the deck in that clamor was impossible. In fact, he could not have been heard. His thin, treble voice would have sounded scarcely so loud as the cry of a sea-mew. Safety, then, depended wholly on himself, as in the stormy life to which he had devoted himself it generally does; hence the fearless self-reliance of the noble profession, which turns timid boys (apt to allow others to think for them), into active men.

He moved slowly along the yard, with his feet on the foot-rope, as if intending to reach the spot in the rigging where it was connected with the mast. Jabez Grunn descended a little way, evidently intending to waylay Ned on the maintop; but the instant the brave boy saw him move, he fell, as if accidentally, his feet only remaining fast, to all appearance caught in the sail, but in reality lightly clinging to the cordage on which he had just been resting.

In this way he swung, head downward.

The astounded seaman began to believe that he was about to be saved from the commission of a crime, and uttered a gleeful oath.

Ned heard him.

"Not yet, Grunn!" said Ned; and, as the vessel lurched, he caught at the rigging with both hands, clinging with the tenacity of a cat, let go with his feet, and, despite a heavy jerk, secured his position, and was on deck before Grunn had recovered from his astonishment.

Then Ned, aware that everybody was too busy to notice him, walked aft, reserving to himself the pleasure of an explanation with the ruffian sailor at a later period.

Indeed, the elements were now too active for men to think of any thing else. The gust was upon them, rushing on with a vanguard of foam; the ship bounded like a racehorse under the whip; the topsails flashed, fell, and soon away she went over the huge waves like a frightened steed, the white foam rising on every hand, and two men grimacing and tugging at the wheel, and yet scarcely able to grind it down.

Ned forgot every thing else in the excitement of the moment, for he was now happy.

CHAPTER IX.

THE OCEAN GIRL.

It was not long before top-gallant sails had to be furled, and the yards lowered on the caps, so stiff was the tropical squall—less dangerous since captains study the glass, but then, unhappily, often fatal, through carrying on to the last moment.

All save those on duty, had left the deck, including the Admiral. But Ned, scarcely yet recovered from the excitement of the attempted murder by Grunn, and, scowling the storm as the war-horse does the battle,

kept in an obscure position on the quarter-deck, holding on to the larboard backstay.

He was never tired of watching the different phases of power exhibited by Nature. On the present occasion, collision, even on the wide ocean, was added to the other dangers of the deep; for a huge mist, capped with black clouds, came driving toward them, hiding the heavens, and completely obscuring the stars.

It was followed by a blast, to which the first gust seemed but child's play.

At this moment the door of the round-house opened, and the voice of the admiral was heard, addressing Captain Dunbar.

"Has any one seen the juvenile?" Egad, he has got a quick eye; we should have been all sung before the gale, if I had taken his word."

"Admiral, the chameleon has many colors."

"I understand you, boy. What is it you wish?"

"I would die to serve you and Loo—I beg pardon, Miss Rawdon—but I ask you, without demanding any explanation, to allow me to go on board that vessel. When I return, perhaps my lips may not be so firmly closed. On my honor as a gentleman, and my faith as a Christian, my intentions are good."

"I believe you," said the admiral, gravely, taking up a glass and examining the pirate craft; "A wonderfully light sparred vessel. Have I not seen her lately, lying off Shepp?"

"You have, sir."

"There seems to me some memory in connection with this Gantling. Knew you him ever by any other name?" Nay, answer not if 'tis displeasing. Poor lad, you have had sad trials on board that vessel, and 'tis a great wonder you did not leave your truthfulness behind. You shall go on board, and when you return I will tell you a story which may assist your recollection."

With these words he put down his glass and went on deck, where he mentioned that Ned was anxious to leave the Indianaman for an hour, and have a row in the dingy to the brigantine, at which everybody was now looking.

Captain Dunbar laughed, and declared that he did not know where, on such a hot day, Master Edward would get his crew, but the dingy was at his service, and he had no doubt of two of the boys would volunteer.

Edward thanked them, and while the boat was getting ready, he retired to his cabin, and wrote a few lines, which he had hastily placed in Leo's work-basket.

"If the boat returns without me, I am a prisoner, never an ingrate."

Then, having secured both pistols, he started upon his bold and daring adventure, actuated by as pure motives and as noble a conception of duty as any hero whose name has come down to us.

The boys were in the boat, quite hearty for the trip, it being a change to them from ordinary duties. The sun was very hot, and the pull a long one, though whether it was a light air, or the effect of the haze, could hardly be made out. Still, with their loose white trowsers, blue shirts, bare arms and natty caps, they looked quite equal to the work.

Ned let himself down the side by a rope, and jumping into the stern sheets, took hold of the yoke lines, and was about to shove off, when the chorus of a well-known voice arrested him.

"Good-by, Edward; don't be long. Only your boat's such a cockle-shell, I'd come too."

"Not for worlds," thought Ned; and then he added, aloud, "You are better off."

"The boat returns without me, I am a prisoner, never an ingrate."

The boys were willing and strong, and bent to it with a will, but it soon became hard work to make head against the waves. Ned sat pale, taciturn and thoughtful. He could not look to his interview with Captain Gantling without emotion. He had always liked—almost loved the man, and it pained him to thwart him, even when his design was so evil. He knew that his whole heart and soul was set upon this enterprise, as leading to that other Arcadian dream, connected with coral lips and scant drapery, about which Ned somehow didn't seem to dream quite so much.

Personal fear for himself he had none; and even had he apprehended violence, it would not have made him pause. There was, however, the fear of the boy buccaneer, vision of right, which even his ill-directed education taught him was paramount. Before it, and his deep regard for his kind parent and playmate, all considerations of the peril—all ideas of wild and lawless glory vanished.

"Come down out of that," said Ned, quietly; "come down out of that, Jabez Grunn."

"I am a boy, sir," said Ned.

"The first time I again see a glimpse of treachery, I shall no longer be able to keep silent, so beware!"

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"And, Jabez Grunn, allow me to give you a very serious piece of advice."

"What is that, sir?"

"Never threaten to murder a reefer, when he is sitting on the hammock-raft, listening to you. I have now some orders to give."

"Yes, sir."

"I am going on board the Ocean Girl. Do not attempt to come with me yourself, nor venture to allow any of your gang to enter my boat. When I return I will bring you orders from Captain Gantling."

"Thank ye, sir," said Jabez, who was bursting with rage and fury.

Ned said no more, but like the island monarch he was destined to become, walked away as unconcerned-looking as if he was without care or trouble; though certainly his trouble just then was greater than ever he had known before. More and more the complications of his fearful trade struck him with dismay, and he asked himself over and over again, why he ever should have fallen into the clutches of one so cruel and vindictive.

The admiral was expecting him to lurch, and not sorry to escape the presence of the great body of passengers, who appeared to him a constant source of remorse, he entered the cabin, and sat down in company with Loo and the governess, a most lady-like and efficient person.

All were so used to what they called the old-fashioned style of the young reefer, that his gravity scarcely excited a remark; and when Mrs. Watson and Loo retired, Sir Stephen was not particularly surprised when Edward demanded the honor of a brief and private interview.

"Sir Stephen," he began, "I am but a boy in years, but during my brief career I have had to endure that which has made me almost a man."

"Your foresight about the storm quite proves that."

"But, sir, sadder and more terrible experiences have done much to age me. Therefore, my generous preserver, when I ask something of your forbearance, believe I have a reason."

"I will."

"Will you honor me by looking from this stern-port—there, where my finger points? You see it. Sir Stephen Rawdon, that is the brigantine of Captain Gantling, the buccaneer, of whose crew I am a member."

"Gad, boy, I see—the same that chased us. But this has a long, pale sort of hull, with a broad streak of red, without ports, and is log-ribbed."

"Admiral, the chameleon has many colors."

"I understand you, boy. What is it you wish?"

"I would die to serve you and Loo—I beg pardon, Miss Rawdon—but I ask you, without demanding any explanation, to allow me to go on board that vessel. When I return, perhaps my lips may not be so firmly closed. On my honor as a gentleman, and my faith as a Christian, my intentions are good."

"I believe you," said the admiral, gravely, taking up a glass and examining the pirate craft; "A wonderfully light sparred vessel. Have I not seen her lately, lying off Shepp?"

"You have, sir."

"There seems to me some memory in connection with this Gantling. Knew you him ever by any other name?" Nay, answer not if 'tis displeasing. Poor lad, you have had sad trials on board that vessel, and 'tis a great wonder you did not leave your truthfulness behind. You shall go on board, and when you return I will tell you a story which may assist your recollection."

With these words he put down his glass and went on deck, where he mentioned that Ned was anxious to leave the Indianaman for an hour, and have a row in the dingy to the brigantine, at which everybody was now looking.

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AN OLD STORY SLIGHTLY ALTERED.

BY JOE JOE, JR.

A farmer to a lawyer came,
With "Mr. — I've forgot his name,
My bull has gored an ox for you,
But I will pay you for it, —"
"Why?" said the judge, "the case is plain:
If my ox by your bull was slain,
That you to make a just return,
Should straightway give me one of your'n."
"But surely a mistake I've made,
I think I'm getting very dull."
"It was my ox killed by your bull."
"If that is so," said the judge, "I guess
That you will give me less;
But if you claim an ox from me,
Take it, but it occurs to me
That I will charge you his full price,
For giving you all this advice."

Recalled to Life: A TALE OF WITCHCRAFT.

BY C. D. CLARK.

SALEM, the abode of witchcraft, was in a ferment. The people were flocking from all quarters, for on that day a man was to die, doomed to death by the edict of the elders of the people, for the supposed crime of dealing with evil spirits. Strange groups they were: stern-browed old men, shaking their heads sagely, and thanking the overruling Providence for unmasking wickedness; youths and maidens, many of whom were in secret sympathy with the victim; and Indians looking stupidly on, and wondering if the pale-faced had gone mad. The man who was to die had been sentenced to stand in the stocks from sunrise to sunset, and when the orb of day had gone down behind the western hills, to perish on the gallows. There he stood, a soldierly man, with a handsome face and stern, erect carriage, looking proudly about him in the hour of his disgrace.

"Look ye, men and women of Salem," he cried, "you who have been my neighbors and friends, bear testimony in the after years that I die guiltless of evil. I have fought against the enemies of England and this good colony, but I never wronged a human being knowingly."

"Peace, Arthur Denham," said a gray-haired elder who stood near. "Think upon your end, and remember that the elders of Salem will do justice."

"Ye are wolves in sheep's clothing," cried the prisoner; "and many an innocent man has died because of your hate? I am guilty of any wrong, save being your enemy, Esquire Gardner."

The old man turned a fierce look upon him, but the prisoner answered by one as haughty.

"Hear me, people of Salem," he cried. "I loved this old man's daughter, and she loved me. He sought a richer husband for his child than poor Arthur Denham—a simple captain of foot—and he accused me before the council of bewitching his daughter. Her innocent words, avowing her love for me, were used against me, and I, who have been a soldier, must die a felon's death. I travel the path which many worthy men and women have done who have gone before me, and I shall die like a man. But, may the vengeance of an outraged God alight upon these wicked men, who have done all his evil. May they perish by the same instrument which they have used against others, and may Caleb Gardner be the first to fall. Amen."

"Ye hear him blaspheme, good people," said Gardner, with trembling lips. "Who shall say that this man is not worthy of his death?" It was well that the elders had commanded that his mouth should be stopped, that he might not infect the people with his lying words."

"They are the words of truth, Esquire Gardner," cried a firm voice, and a young man pushed his way through the crowd, and confronted the justice. "False old man, it would be a good deed for this colony if I were to bury my sword in your body to the hilt."

He was the exact counterpart of the prisoner in every respect. Looking from one to the other, the people uttered cries of surprise, for it seemed as if the double of Arthur Denham stood before them. He was richly dressed, wearing the garb of a gentleman of birth and breeding, and armed with a long Spanish rapier, upon which his hand dropped involuntarily as he faced the justice, who staggered back in manifest alarm.

"Archie!" cried the prisoner, "have you come to look upon my death?"

"I have come to save you, if possible; but, I fear my words will avail but little with these misguided men. Deimonology and witchcraft! What are they but the silly ones of old women and foolish men, and those who for their own base purposes make use of them. You, Esquire Gardner, and such men as you, will have a heavy account to settle at the judgment day."

"Said I not truly that witchcraft is rife in the land?" cried Gardner, pointing at the speaker. "Who is this but the spirit called up by the limb of Satan, to speak for him and delude the people. See! in dress, in length of limb, in face, he is Arthur Denham. Speak; who are you?"

"Ask the captain of the Mayflower, in which I sailed from London. I am Major Archibald Denham, of the 40th regiment of foot, and there stands my brother, a gallant soldier doomed to die. By heaven! it shall not be! And you do not know me, Esquire Gardner. Give back that of which you have robbed us—render an account of your stewardship, and all may be well!"

"I know him not," stammered Gardner. "Of what does he speak?"

"Of the money and jewels with which you fled from England, the property of my family. Hal! do you tremble? Be assured, my brother, that live or die, I will avenge this wrong upon the one who is guilty."

Even as he spoke, and while Gardner stood trembling before him, the crowd parted, and a lovely girl sprung forward and threw herself upon the neck of the prisoner, clutching with grief.

"Oh, my love, my love!" she moaned, "and have I brought you to this?"

The prisoner uttered a sob and looked at his bound hands, and the tears sprung into the eyes of the lookers on. Elizabeth Gardner had nothing in common with her stern old father. A delicate, shrinking, beautiful creature, with sunny-brown hair and deep blue eyes; the pride of the village, loved by all, and deeply pitied even by those who thought she was under a curse.

"My darling," said Arthur Denham, "and must you come to look upon my shame?"

"They tried to keep me, false-hearted

that they are," she sobbed. "I have come to share your shame—if shame there is in loving. See! I accuse myself. Of whatever wrong Arthur Denham has done, I am the sharer. Condemn me, too, people of Salem, and let us die together."

"Hush, Elizabeth; for the sake of the law, be silent. You do not know how little will condemn you in this wicked town."

"I care not. My mind is made up to share your trouble. Ah! do not touch me, father. I will not be separated from the man I love."

"You hear this, good people," said Gardner, with a look of hypocritical sorrow. "Did I not say truly that he had bewitched her, and turned a pure heart to evil. How else would she cling to one whom the elders have condemned?"

A murmur ran through the crowd, and people looked at one another in wonder and doubt.

"Come away from him, child," said the father, advancing. "Let me take you home."

"I will not go. Do not let him touch me, if you are men."

"Take care, old villain," hissed Archibald Denham; "let her alone."

"Not I; she is my child, and I command her to return with me."

"And I say let her bid farewell to one she loves. Hal! you will have it; then take that night Esquire Gardner fled from Salem, and two weeks after his mangled body was found between Salem and Boston. How he died no man ever knew. But a relation had set in, and the people who had clamored for the death of Denham were most eager in wishing him joy when, a year later, he led Elizabeth Gardner to the altar. But the anniversary of that fearful day was always remembered in the house of Arthur Denham.

Gardner had already laid his hand upon his daughter's shoulder to drag her away, when the young major struck him with his open hand such a blow as sent him reeling to the earth. Gardner started up and called to his adherents, and half a dozen of them surrounded Denham; but his sword was out, and with the keen point sweeping from side to side he kept them all at bay. At the same time, half a dozen men who had been mere lookers on, sprung to his side with drawn weapons. They were his friends, who had landed from the ship.

"Keep off, all of you," he cried; "I bear the commission of a higher power than yours, and will answer this at that trial."

The adherents of Gardner fell back, and stooping, Archibald whispered a few words in the ear of his brother. Then calling his men about him, he passed through the crowd, moving toward the harbor. The prisoner pressed his lips to those of Elizabeth once more, and she sank fainting at his feet, and was removed by her friends.

"You see, Cap'n Jack had given orders that none of the boyees war to forage on the Dons, an' so we fared party rough for a while, seein' that warn't any game, except greasers, an' they ain't no chawin' nohow, in that section of the kentry."

"You didn't know Jack Hayes, but I'll tell you that when he said as how enny thing had or hadn't to be done, why he meant it, an' twon't be dangerous to go disobeyin' commands. Cap'n Jack won't durned quick uv trigger that that warn't no 'pendence to be put into him arter you had made him mad."

"Yur see, our company war detailed, that's what they called it, to hang round ole Rough an' Ready's headquarters, so as he could hev quick work done when he wanted to, an' I tell yur, my boyee, that war party oftenly."

"This here trip war one of that kind."

"On'y the night before Cap'n Jack hed said, 'boyees, yur can have a day er two rest now; but, mind,' sed he, 'no stealin' while we're in Monterey or about the General's headquarters, or thar'll be trouble in that."

"But we didn't have the rest an' as war promised, fur the very next mornin' the cap'n roun'ed us out with fust crack uv day, an' in less'n a hour we war out on the great nor'-western road, makin' tracks fur Saltillo, whar we war wanted bad."

"Them 'ere fellers, them commysaries,

"These traitors shall have their just dues," cried Gardner. "We shall see whether this can pass current or not. As for you, Arthur Denham, make your peace with heaven, for when the sun sets you die."

The sun went slowly down in a blaze of glory, and those who yet watched the prisoner said that his face looked more like that of a saint than a man. At the appointed hour the guards came and removed him from the stocks and led him away toward the center of the village, where the crowd followed. Here the gallows had been set up, upon which so many worthy men had perished, and where, but a few days before, a faithful clergyman, George Burroughs, had yielded up his life. He was led up the platform, and looked down upon the sea of faces tilted toward him with a strange smile. Directly in front were the seats of the judges who had condemned him, for these stern men did not fear to look upon their work.

"You have permission to speak," said Gardner; "but, beware what you say."

"Why should I speak?" he said. "I am brought here to die, and you who murder me will not be moved by any words of mine. I die innocent of any wrong, as I pray you all to believe. Good-by, friends and foes. Now do your wicked work since you must."

The black cap was drawn over his head, the rope adjusted, and the next moment he was swinging in the air.

"Way there!" cried a fierce voice. "Up, if you be men, and save the life of an innocent man."

There was a rush of feet, and the enemies of Denham threw themselves in the way, but went down in an instant, and Archibald Denham sprang upon the staging, and by a single blow of his keen sword, severed the rope, and his brother dropped upon the platform with a dull sound.

"Stand back there!" cried the major.

"I have here the craven wretch who accused my brother of witchcraft, and he is ready to make oath that he was bribed to perjury by Esquire Gardner. Make way there; perhaps I may save him yet."

Four strong men lifted the senseless body and carried it to his house, and laid it on a table. "Leave me, all of you," said the major, sadly. "I am a better physician than you have in this thrice-accursed town, and if any man can save him, I can do it. Wait outside. Fletcher and Barnes, and if I need you, I can call."

"My darling," said Arthur Denham, "and must you come to look upon my shame?"

"They tried to keep me, false-hearted

brother, he laid his hand upon the heart. It had ceased to beat, but he forced open the set teeth and poured some drops of a dark-colored liquid down his throat. Then sinking into the chair, he fixed his eyes upon the face of his brother and waited. Ten minutes passed, twenty, and he had not changed his attitude, when the door was thrown suddenly open, and Elizabeth Gardner hurried in, and flung herself upon the lifeless form. Archibald started up and raised her, saying in a heart-broken tone: "My poor child, you have set your heart upon the dead. Let me lead you away."

"His heart beats! He lives, he lives!" she cried. "Do not take me from him."

Archibald, with a cry of delight, laid his hand upon his brother's breast. She had spoken truly. His heart did beat, but faintly.

"Thank God!" he said. "You have recalled him to life. Now, if you would save him, go away and send in the two men who wait outside."

She obeyed, and Fletcher and Barnes came in, and by the use of friction and hot wine, they recalled the fluttering life. In an hour he was able to sit up and converse, and then Elizabeth came to him, and the rest went out and left them together.

That night Esquire Gardner fled from Salem, and two weeks after his mangled body was found between Salem and Boston. How he died no man ever knew. But a relation had set in, and the people who had clamored for the death of Denham were most eager in wishing him joy when, a year later, he led Elizabeth Gardner to the altar. But the anniversary of that fearful day was always remembered in the house of Arthur Denham.

rober all over, an' the way they did bounce that ole Mexikin war a caution.

"Thar war two fine-lookin' gals in the house, darters uv the Don, an' they war scart wuss'n any."

"By'm-by, we heard the crack uv ole John's pistol; that war the sign fur us to kin up, an' so over the wall we scrambled, an' charged down onto the ranch like a whole regiment uv cavalry."

"Lordy! Yur oughter's seen the scramblin': the Mexikins thought as how we war a fresh lot uv them es hed fast kem, an' to work they set, screedin' an' howlin' an' yellin', jess es of the ole scratch had 'a' been turned loose among 'em."

"But we didn't hev no time to explain, fur the robbers war makin' off with half thers things about ther place in the claws, so we charged 'em ag'in in the undergrowth, driv 'em over the walls, an' then went back to the house to look after the ole Mexikin, who war act'ally most dead, owin' to the skeer."

"I tell yur, them two black-eyed sennoy-ties made a powerful to-do over us, as hed saved that lifes, they said."

"An' the way they did feed us war a sight to see! An' drink?"

"Wauh! We jess swallered in all sorts, an' by'm-by, we all got fuller uv aggredint nor a bat'ar uv ticks."

"But, yur see, while we war a feedin', Ole John an' Rube an' the balance war out in the cold, sufferin' fur somethin' to eat while we war a-crammin' ourselves chock-full."

"I knowed the cusses couldn't stand it long, an' so, ev'ry time the ole Don on the sennoy-ties turned thar backs, I jerked the grub an' flicker bottles into my possible sack."

"Sorter purridin' ag'in emergencies, yur know; an', durn my cats of them 're emergencies didn't come purty quick."

"Fust thing we knowed that war a awful rumpuss out on the verandy; then a cuple uv pistol shots; then ole John a-shoutin' fur help, an', lastly, a whole volly uv them bucket-muzzled 'scopers what the greasers uses."

"What do 'ee think fetched the yaller-bellies onto us? Why, may I be chawed by a yearlin' calf, of that ole Don jess hadn't seen through our little game, an', while he war a-makin' believe to be awful obligeed to the insurgents, we the cuss hed sent off after a Mexikin company, es war camped not very fur off."

"Well, we war in a nice pickle! We didn't much mind the greasers, but, yur see, Cap'n Jack war bound to find us out, an'

"What do 'ee think fetched the yaller-bellies onto us? Why, may I be chawed by a yearlin' calf, of that ole Don jess hadn't seen through our little game, an', while he war a-makin' believe to be awful obligeed to the insurgents, we the cuss hed sent off after a Mexikin company, es war camped not very fur off."

"The defense of the female sex in general, in the regard due to their honor, the subservience paid to their commands, the reverend awe and courtesy which in their presence forbear all unseemly words and actions, were so blended with the institution of chivalry, as to form its very essence."

The ladies, bound as they were in honor to require the passion of their knights, were wont, on such occasions, to dignify them by the present of a scarf, a ribbon, or glove, which was to be worn in the press of battle and tournament; and these marks of favor were accounted the best incentives to deeds of valor.

In the Middle Ages, the knights of each country brought to that serious conflict the spirit of romantic attachment, which had been cherished in the hour of peace. They fought at Poitiers or Verneuil, as they had fought at tournaments, bearing over their armor scarfs and devices, as the livery of their mistresses, and asserting their paramount beauty in vaunting challenges toward the enemy.

Thus, in the middle of a keen skirmish at Cherbourg, the squadrons remained motionless, while one knight challenged to a single combat the most gallant of the adversaries. Such a defiance was soon accepted, and the battle only recommenced when one of the champions had lost his life for his love. In the first campaign of Edward's war, some young English knights wore a covering over one eye, vowing, for the sake of their ladies, never to see with both, till they should have signalized their prowess in the field.

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"The yaller-bellies charged us real savage, jess es if they war in yearnest, but, arter we had emptied half a dozen uv saddles, they begin to weaken an' sorter haul off."

"They didn't know Jack Hays was in the neighborhood, that's earth, or they wouldn't a' stayed half as long as they did, but, I tell yur, they found it out purty soon, you bet they did!"

"We war out in the bresh in the front yard, an' a-worriin' the greasers powerful wi' our pistols, when, all uv a sudden, I hear our bugle, as Cap'n Jack blowed himself, an' lookin' over thar way, I wish I may die of I didn't see a sight as most took my breath."

"Jess es I looked, I see the big iron-gray—Gulliver, the cap'n called him, arter the big fellers es went among them 'uns an' scart 'em nigh to death—a-risin' into the air clean an' clear 'bove the top uv a eight-foot wall."

"Twar splendid, it war to a sartiny; but, Lordy! Cap'n Jack Hays an' the hoss could do eny thing."

"Yes, sir! I jess sailed over the wall like a perryall chicken, while the other fellers went 'round by ther gate, an' afore them poor devils uv Mexikins knowned what war up, Cap'n Jack an' the boyees war down on 'em like more'n a thousand uv bricks."